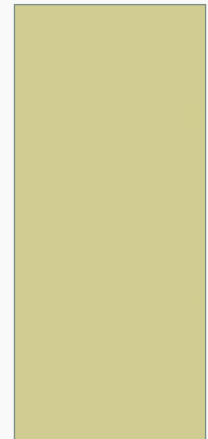


# WHAT STRUGGLING READERS NEED

PRESENTED AT THE ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL'S 47<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
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# DESCRIPTION

- **This session will focus on some key components that should be found both within whole group and small group literacy instruction and intervention.**
- **Whole group instruction:** some key components that will benefit the struggling readers the most, while not 'harming' the other students!
- **Small groups:** using frameworks, materials, and strategies that are most beneficial for progressing authentic literacy abilities for children who struggle.

# INTRODUCTIONS

- Who am I?
  - ✓ **Professor:** The University of Akron
  - ✓ **School consultant:** Moving research into classrooms
  - ✓ **Author:** Subscribe to my articles for free on Examiner.com (<http://www.examiner.com/early-childhood-education-5-in-akron/brandi-noll>)
  - ✓ **Teacher Advocate & Advocate for Struggling Readers**
- **Who are you?**

## TURN & TALK

- Let's talk about core reading instruction in the regular education classroom...

*What are some reasons that students don't succeed in learning to become effective and efficient readers within core reading instruction?*

# RATIONALE FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN CORE CLASSROOM LITERACY INSTRUCTION

- Too often students who struggle are simply pulled out of the regular education classrooms.
- The **instruction becomes disconnected or becomes “something different”** - rather than connected to the core classroom.
- **Students often don’t transfer what they learn** outside the classroom to grade level instruction inside the classroom and/or are **repeatedly being told (implicitly) that they cannot succeed** in grade level instruction.

## STUDENTS IN CORE CLASSROOM LITERACY INSTRUCTION CONT'D...

- Too often **whole group instruction fails to include small, strategic supports** specifically for the students who struggle.
- Oftentimes, **regular education teachers are directed to teach to three groups**: low, middle and high. This promotes the constant use of “easy” tasks for struggling students, **rather than scaffolding so that grade level tasks can become within reach.**

## STUDENTS IN CORE CLASSROOM LITERACY INSTRUCTION CONT'D...

- Many times regular education teachers **believe that miraculous things** occur for struggling students when an interventionist or tutor pulls these students out of class (“It’s better for the student”).
- Too often there is **no connection between intervention and instruction**...they simply run parallel to each other.

**Most classroom teachers want to help struggling students, but are sometimes unsure how!**

# REACHING ALL STUDENTS

- Whole group format doesn't always match struggling students' needs or strengths.
  - Struggling students may need more immediate, corrective feedback
  - Can have attention issues
  - Might be unmotivated by whole class content
  - There could be too large of a gap between their abilities and the content being presented
  - Students may not have enough background knowledge
  - Their attitude may have been established already (This is too hard. This is dumb. I can't succeed.)



## SOLUTION #1

Pre-teaching:

Provide the student with small group instruction that reinforces or supports whole group instruction BEFORE whole group.

# SET STUDENTS UP FOR SUCCESS

...Rather than waiting for them to fail!

- Most common model of integrating small group with whole group instruction: Students sitting through whole class instruction, followed by pulling them out into small group afterward.
- This creates a *let's 'fix' you...you 'failed'* tone. "Since you couldn't do this with the rest of the class...let's do this here."

# SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTIONAL GOAL: **PRE-TEACH**

- Inside or outside the classroom
- **Pre-teach an upcoming lesson/skill** (abbreviated version) as a first exposure so that the whole group lesson is not completely new.
  - Introduce student to the “big idea”
  - Preview and discuss key vocabulary
  - Provide examples or modeling for the student
  - Build the student’s confidence
  - Read through the whole group text together
  - Provide the student with a task to carry out in whole group instruction (purpose for listening and engaging)

# SPECIFIC EXAMPLE #1

## Whole Class Instruction:

- The class will be reading about a social studies topic using a non-fiction text that is at grade level.
- The teacher is building background knowledge by reading a short informational piece.
- Students are asked to discuss what they know about the topic by first making a list of things they know and then sharing with peers.

# SETTING THE STUDENTS UP FOR SUCCESS

- The teacher works with a small group of students for about **10 minutes before the whole group instruction.**
- **Together**
  - \*\* The group discusses what they know about the topic.
  - \*\* The teacher models writing this in a list form and clarifies language.
  - \*\* The teacher asks additional questions to promote deep thinking and to fill in missing information.

# SETTING GOALS FOR WHOLE GROUP

- As the teacher prepares to send the students off into the whole group for the upcoming lesson, she charges the students with **writing a list of at least four things** they talked about in small group.

## WHAT IS LIKELY TO OCCUR...

- The student will already have had ideas to write, so writing can occur immediately (as compared to not getting anything written).
- The student will feel confident knowing that when it comes time to share, he will have something to share (as opposed to having nothing to contribute).
- The student may be viewed as an “expert” or as “successful” by peers (rather than being viewed as “dumb” or “slow”).

## SPECIFIC EXAMPLE #2

### Whole group instruction:

- The class will be reading a grade level text independently.
- After they are done reading the first two pages of this informational text, the students are to complete a graphic organizer telling about what they just read.



# SETTING THE STUDENTS UP FOR SUCCESS

- The teacher can provide some **direct instruction about the text** that can provide the student with a plan of attack.
- Together the small group can **read headings** (teacher can provide guidance and feedback about **word attack strategies**, and **discuss vocabulary**).

## SETTING THE STUDENTS UP FOR SUCCESS CONT...

- The **teacher might read the beginning of the text** as the group follows along with their fingers (This reduces the amount of independent reading by students so they can finish with their peers.)
- The teacher can **assist the students with making notes** about which sections will likely lead to information needed for each section of the graphic organizer.

# SETTING GOALS FOR WHOLE GROUP

In preparation for whole class instruction:

- The teacher charges students to **remember a couple of key words** that are found in the text.
- These key words are written on the white board for student decoding and discussion.
- Students are to **underline these words each time they come across them in the text** as they read silently during whole group instruction.

## WHAT IS LIKELY TO OCCUR...

- The students will have had some direct instruction in word attack skills that they may get a chance to try right away on their own (rather than continuing to be unsuccessful at attacking new words).
- The student will know some key words when reading independently which will aid fluency and comprehension (rather than taking a long time to figure out many unknown words).

## WHAT IS LIKELY TO OCCUR CONT...

- The students are going to feel a positive twinge of accomplishment each time they come across the key words they discussed already since they know these (rather than focusing on the words they don't know all the time).
- The students will be more familiar with the text and its structure (rather than not knowing what to expect when encountering it).
- The students will have some idea of where to find information that is to go on the graphic organizer (rather than completing it wrong or leaving it blank).

# GENERAL PRE-TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Extra modeling
- Multiple exposures to texts
- Extra exposures to skills and strategies
- More teaching about being strategic
- Getting a head start on a task – so it's already started (which is the hardest part)
- More opportunities for corrective feedback
- A chance to build confidence

# FOR ANY TASK, ANY AGE LEVEL

- This **‘pre-teaching in small group’** concept can be used by any teacher of any subject, and in any grade level.
- In order to prepare for pre-teaching, the teacher asks:
  - “What do I know has kept this small group of students from being successful in whole group, grade-level instruction in the past?” (**know the students**)
  - “What is challenging about this upcoming lesson that might keep my students from being successful? (**know the content**)

## TURN & TALK

- Turn to a neighbor...and discuss any of the following:
  - Have you thought of any **specific examples of this type of small group instruction** you have witnessed or been a part of in the past that would provide another example?
  - Can you see any other **benefits** (not yet mentioned) to the most struggling students by providing this type of instruction?
  - **Can you envision one way you could utilize this concept in an upcoming lesson?**



## SOLUTION #2

- Provide your most struggling students with a variety of **supports during whole group instruction**.
- Embedded & Purposeful Differentiation
  - **Embedded** = Within your whole group instruction and so no one would even recognize it directed at the most struggling students!
  - **Purposeful** = You plan to use it because it is very specifically matched to the needs of your most struggling students!

# STRUGGLING READERS SOMETIMES NEED...

- Modeling
- Scaffolding
- Visual displays
- Direct instruction
- Multiple exposures to concepts
- Word attack strategies
- Background knowledge

All of which can be provided during whole group instruction as well as in small group!

# SPECIFIC EXAMPLE #1

## Difficult New Content Concept:

- The teacher is providing students with text about a new science concept that may be relatively new to some of the most struggling students.
- The text contains a lot of content specific vocabulary that will likely overwhelm a reader with low word attack skills and a lack of schema related to this topic.

# EMBEDDED DIFFERENTIATION

- The teacher explains to the whole class that the topic of the upcoming text has to do with “X.”
- A brief explanation is given about how important background knowledge is for students in order to read the upcoming text (embedded direct instruction in making connections about strategies).
- The teacher puts students into heterogeneous groups and has a list of questions students should discuss to build background (embedded building of background knowledge using peers).

# STUDENTS WORK IN GROUPS

The following questions are answered within each group (orally) – and everyone must be provided time to respond to each question:

- Have you ever heard of “X” before? Explain what you know about it or can connect to it.
- Did you ever see an “X” in any TV shows? Or read any books in which they mention “X”?
- Maybe you have heard of “Y” before, it is related to “X” – what do you know about it?

## SPECIFIC EXAMPLE #2

### Writing Assignment with Use of Word Wall:

- A primary grade teacher has read aloud a big book and then students are asked to write a response to it in their journals.
- Before writing begins, the teacher reminds students to use the word wall as a support for both sight words they have learned recently and spelling pattern posters about phonics lessons.
- The teacher quickly reviews which words and spelling patterns are displayed.

# EMBEDDED DIFFERENTIATION

- Although non-struggling students may not use the word wall, it is a great scaffold for students who are struggling but they may need prompting to use it.
- The teacher specifically and directly points out that it is useful and also reviews words to provide an extra exposure.
- The words displayed also have a visual support for students so that they can find them easily (For example, sight words might all be written in blue).

## TO FOLLOW UP...

- As a follow up, the teacher will want to gravitate toward the struggling students while everyone is working to see if they are using the word wall as a support, and if so, to provide positive reinforcement.
- If the students are not using this support, the teacher can provide some more guidance and encouragement.



## IN CLOSING...

- Being a part of whole group regular education classroom instruction has so many benefits for struggling students (IEP or not); however, very specific and purposeful supports need to be in place to help them get the most out of the experience.

# QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

Please feel free to contact me at:

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Thank you😊